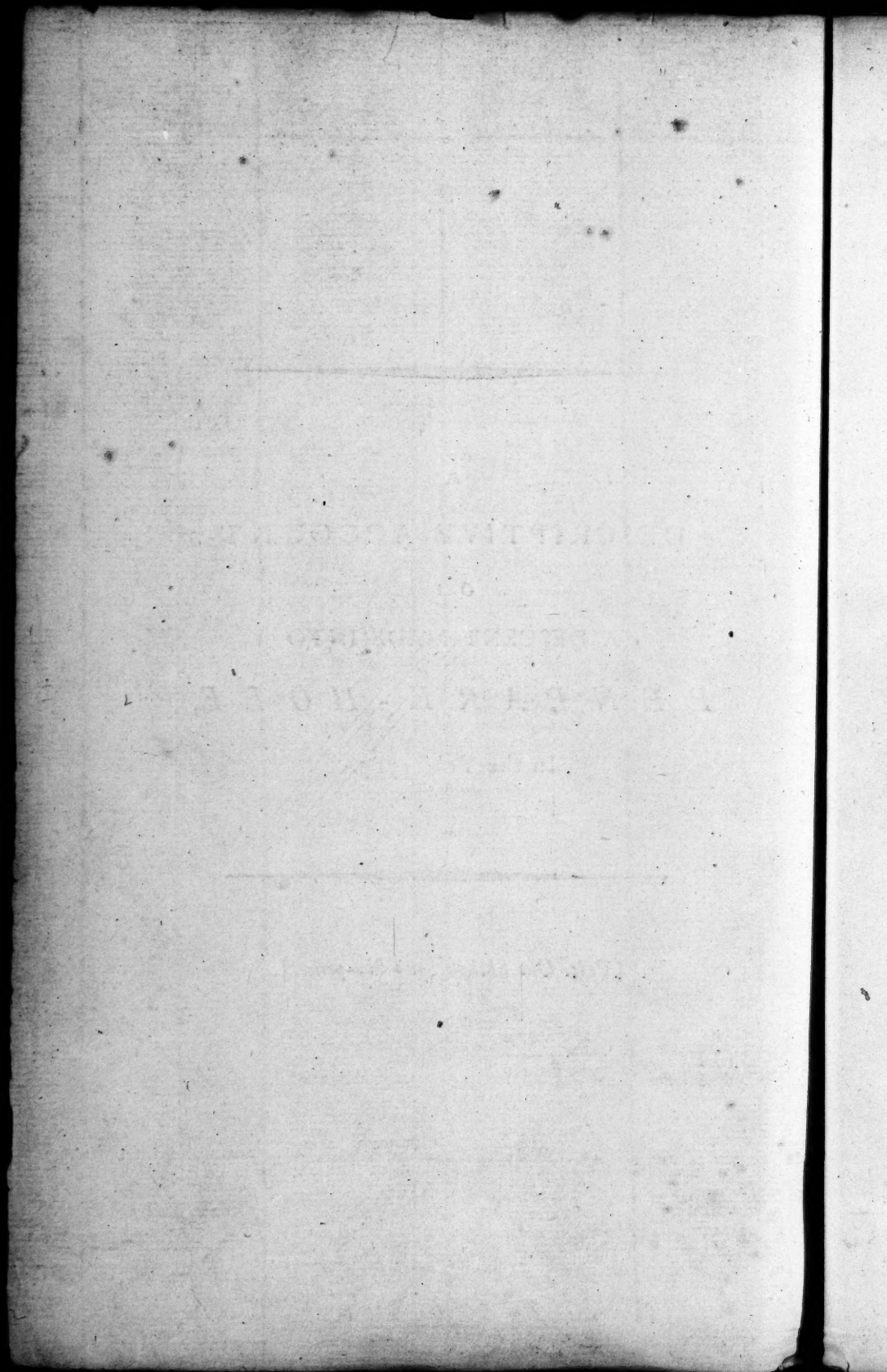

A
DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT
O F
A DESCENT MADE INTO
P E N P A R K - H O L E,
In the Year 1775.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

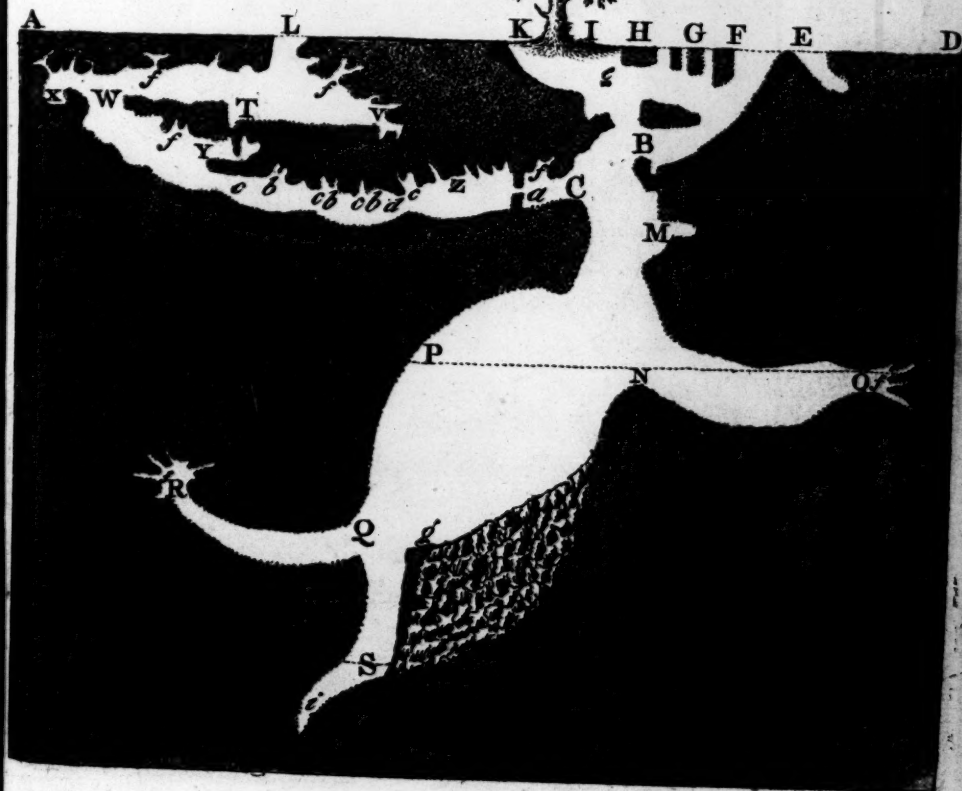


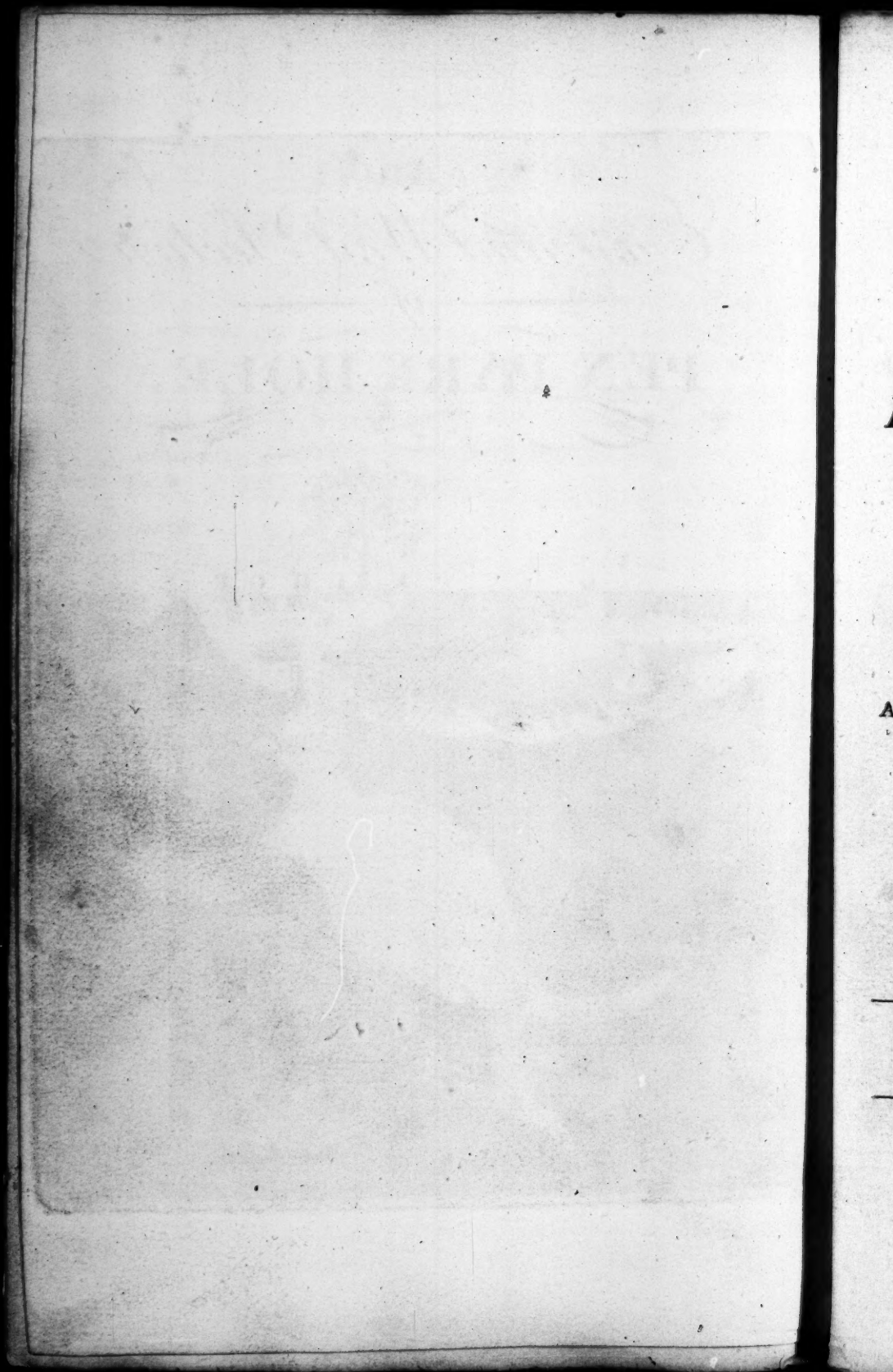
EXPLANATION

- A.L.K.I.H.G.F.E.D. Surface of the Earth*
A. The East
D. The West
E. a small Cave
F.B. The upper Western Cavity or Passage
H.I.K. The great Mouth of the Cavern
I. an Ash Tree growing over the same
I.B.M.N.S. The Passage down
M. a small Cavity
N.O. The lower Western Cavity
P.O. The Surface of the Water in it's highest Stage
S. Ditto in it's lowest Stage
L.T. descent into the upper Eastern Tunnel
T.V. The upper Branch thereof Westward
T.W.X. The Extent Eastward
X.Y.Z.C. The lower Branch thereof Westward
Q.R. The lower Eastern Cavity nearly the same as the lower Western
a. a kind of doorway
b.b.b. Small Cavities
c.c.c.c. Very strait Passages
d. Small unpasable Chasim running into the Rocks
e. A Pillar of Stone
f.f.f.f. Small Tunnells running upward amongst the Rocks
g. A large Rock apparently fallen from the Roof
h. Stone and Rubbish from the Surface &c.
i. Subterranean Passage through which the Water vents itself

6

An
East and West Section
of
PEN PARK HOLE.





577.e.26
7

A
D E S C R I P T I V E
A C C O U N T
OF A DESCENT MADE INTO
P E N P A R K - H O L E,
In the Parish of WESTBURY-UPON-TRIM,
IN THE COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER,
In the Year 1775,
NOW FIRST PUBLISHED:
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVING OF THAT
REMARKABLE CAVERN.
A L S O,
T H E N A R R A T I V E S
Of Captains STURMEY and COLLINS,
Containing their Descriptions of the same, in the Years
1669 and 1682.

By GEORGE SYMES CATCOTT.

B R I S T O L:
PRINTED BY J. RUDHALL, IN SMALL-STREET,
And sold by the BOOKSELLERS in *Bristol*; and MEYLER and
BULL, *Bath*. 1792.

DESCRIPTIVE

A. C. O. U. N. T.

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R E A D E R.

SEVERAL Years are now elapsed since the melancholy Event happened, which gave Occasion to the following Observations.---- If it be asked why they did not appear sooner, the Author's Answer is, first, that he was then
too

too much engaged in Business, to give due Attention to the Subject; and secondly, that he was diffident whether they might be thought worthy of the public Notice: But having since had Leisure to apply his Thoughts more closely to the Matter, and also taking the Opinions of some ingenious and learned Friends, for whose Judgment he has a great Deference, he has been induced to revise and enlarge what he had written, before he committed it to the Press. And to make the Publication more compleat and satisfactory, he has added the
 printed

printed Accounts of this extraordinary Cavern given by Captains STURMEY and COLLINS; by the former, in the Year 1669, and by the latter, in 1682; these are the only printed Accounts of it, that he knows of; and these were thought fit to be inserted among the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, though they do not give a minute or circumstantial Description, or convey an adequate Idea of this wonderful Subterranean Cave.

THE Author hopes that what is here given to the Public, will
be

be found to supply their Deficiencies; and may therefore be entitled to the Candor of his Readers, especially of those who delight to explore the more secret, and as it were, hidden Recesses of Nature: And if they effect this, he shall be highly gratified, and think the Difficulties and Dangers he submitted to, in order to make the present Discoveries, to have been conducive to some useful and desirable Purpose.

STILL further to bespeak their Indulgence, he begs also to remind

mind them, that he makes no Pretensions to deep Literature; they will therefore not expect from him, any Philosophical Researches or Attempts to explain and account for the Causes or Formation of this wonderful Abyss.---They will here only receive the plain Narrative of *one* whose Life has been checquered with various Vicissitudes; through the whole Course of which, he trusts he has never wilfully deviated from the strictest Regard to *Truth* and *Integrity*; which he humbly hopes will not forsake him, during the Remainder of his Journey

Journey through it. Under this
Perfuasion, he flatters himself this
small Work will meet with a
favourable Reception from his
Friends, and an impartial Public.

A

Descriptive Account, &c.

THE very melancholy Circumstance of the Rev. Mr. NEWNAM's falling into *Pen-park-Hole*, on the 17th of March, 1775, greatly excited the Curiosity of the Public, and for some Weeks brought together a vast Concourse of People daily to visit the gloomy Spot. A few Persons of Credit summoned Fortitude sufficient to descend into, and explore this dreary Cavern, which Attempt would upon any other Occasion, have been rejected with
Horror,

Horror, and deemed almost impracticable. As my Curiosity also prompted me amongst a few others, to descend into this Place of Darkness, the Reader may depend upon the Authenticity of the subsequent Account, taken at two different Surveys, viz. on Monday the 20th of March, and Easter-Monday April 17th, 1775, which I, by Desire, communicated in a Letter to my kind and much respected Friend and Benefactor, Dr. FRANCIS WOODWARD, then an eminent Physician at Bath.

The Mouth of this subterraneous Cavern runs nearly East and West, being about 35 Feet long, and 14 wide. Near the Middle is a Separation caused by an Ash Tree, the Root of which growing part in the North Bank, and Part in the South, supports the Tree growing over the

the Mouth of this (as I may very justly call it) tremendous Cavern, for never did I till then, see so dreadful a Chasm.—A little below this Tree, is a Prop or Pillar of Stone, which appears to have been left with a Design to keep the North, or Back-part from falling down. Below this Pillar the Tunnel extends itself higher and wider. About 12 Yards from the Surface or Mouth of the Hole, is a smaller Cavity, running Westward, down which a Person may (if he is cautious) go safely without Assistance; and at the Bottom, by leaning over the Precipice of the Rock, in a clear and light Day, have a distinct View of the Form and Structure of the main Tunnel, and Part of the Water below. When the Cavern is viewed from this Place, the Spectator is immediately struck with Horror, at the Sight of the rugged Rocks, which hang over

B

Head,

Head, and the deep and gloomy Gulph beneath. The few (and indeed they are but very few) who have been bold enough to go to the Bottom of this dreary Cavern, descended at the Place where the unfortunate Mr. NEWNAM fell in, which lies nearly East and West, as mentioned before; and were let down gradually by the Assistance of two or three Men, who attended there for that Purpose. The Ropes, which ran in Pullies, were fastened to the Root of the Ash Tree before-mentioned. At first the Entrance is very steep, and continues so for about 27 Feet. I am informed by a Gentleman (Mr. WILLIAM WHITE) who has taken a very accurate Survey of it, that it is 4 Feet in 6 perpendicular; and the Roof in some Places, not 3 Feet in height. When you are passed this Place, you immediately disappear from the Eyes of the
Spec-

Spectators. About 30 Feet lower, there is a large Cavern, on each Side the Rock, one in an East, the other in a West Direction: That on the Western Side, which is much the smaller, may be easily entered; but that on the Eastern, which is about 5 Yards higher up, is far more difficult of Access; though some very few curious Persons have been bold enough to enter them both. An ingenious Person of my Acquaintance (the before-mentioned Mr. WILLIAM WHITE) who has taken a very exact Drawing of the Whole, informed me, that he had visited both these Caverns: *That* to the Westward extends about 20 Yards, where he found the Way nearly stopped up by several large cragged Stones, which appeared to have fallen from the Roof. These Caverns are rendered still more gloomy by the Batts, which are some-

times seen flying about them. I had a tolerable View of both Caverns in my Passage up and down, but as I was un-
 used to visit such Places, I was too anxious for my own Safety, to enter that on the Eastern Side, but contented myself with taking an accurate Survey of the other.

About the Midway, there is a small Projection of the Rock, scarce large enough for two Persons to stand on. Here I staid some Minutes to breathe, as well as to take a View of this dreary Place, as it cannot be seen to so much Advantage, from any other Part. When I had sufficiently gratified my Curiosity, I walked from thence along the Ridge of the Rock, into the Western Cavern, which I found to be about 30 Feet long, and 8 or 10 broad at the Entrance, and nearly as much

much in height. I found this Apartment perfectly dry, but nothing worthy of Observation in it: There were a few loose Stones scattered up and down the Bottom, but they were neither so large or numerous, as those in the Caverns below. I know not whether it may be worth mentioning, but I thought it somewhat remarkable, that when I last visited this Place, I could not see a single Batt in any Part of it: I suppose they had changed their Habitation, finding themselves disturbed and molested by Persons daily descending to their peculiar Domains.

When you have passed these Caverns, you descend in a direct perpendicular, between 30 and 40 Feet, after which, you reach the Bottom, by a Descent almost as steep as that you just before passed. I
 imagine

imagine the whole length from the Surface to the Bottom, when the Water is low, to be about 200 Feet. When you are arrived there, you land on a large Quantity of broken Rocks, Dirt, Stones, &c. partly thrown down by Persons who visit the Mouth of the Cave from Motives of Curiosity, and partly by Rains, melting of Snow, &c. which form a Kind of Bay between two Caverns, both filled, when I was there the first Time, with Water. When you survey the Place from hence, Objects only of the most dismal Kind, present themselves to View from every Quarter: And indeed nothing less than ocular Demonstration, can convey to the Mind an adequate Idea of the gloomy Appearance of these subterranean Caverns. The deep Water almost directly under your Feet, rendered still more gloomy, by the faint glimmering Rays of Light,

reflected

reflected upon its Surface from the Openings of the Chafms above, and the black rugged Rocks, horrid Precipices and deep yawning Caverns over Head, brought to my Remembrance, the following Lines of MILTON :

- “ The dismal Situation waste and wild,
 “ A Dungeon horrible on all Sides——
 “ No Light, but rather Darknefs visible
 “ Serv’d only to discover Sights of Woe,
 “ Regions of Horror, doleful Shades, &c.”

The Cavern on the Left, which runs Westward, is 78 Feet in Length, and 16 in Breadth. The Entrance into it, is rendered very awful, by a shelving Roof on the North Side, about 20 Feet high, which gradually decreases, till it terminates in small Branches running in amongst the Rocks.—When I visited this Place Easter-Monday, April 17, the Water

ter was totally deficcated, and as I had with me a sufficient Quantity of Lights, I had an Opportunity, by disposing of them properly, of traversing it quite to the End, and examining every Part with the most minute Circumspection, which I could not do before. I was however obliged to be very cautious how I proceeded, as the Bottom and Sides were still very slippery and damp, occasioned by the Mud and Slime which the Water had deposited. On examining this Cavern, I observed a large Quantity of semipelucid Spar, on the Sides and Bottom; some of the former, I brought up with me, but that which adhered to the Bottom, was of a whiter Colour and appeared more Opaque than the other. On the Lower-End and Sides, are Chasms through which I suppose the Water vents itself; and from the Mud and Slime remaining

maining on the Sides of the Rock, I conceive there must be at least 8 Feet of Water in this Cavity, in the wet Seasons. The Bottom was entirely covered with large rough Stones, some of them near a Ton weight; which appeared to have fallen from the Roof and Sides. On the Right, a large spacious Apartment opens to your View, about 90 Feet long, and 52 broad, running from the Landing-Place, towards the North-East, with a hard rockey vaulted Roof, about 30 Feet above the Water, when I was there, the first Time, but when the Water is at the lowest, I suppose it must be at least 90 Feet, so that you cannot even with the Assistance of Torches discover distinctly the Summit of it.

A Place so spacious and lofty, must exhibit to a Person unaccustomed to sub-

C

terranean

terranean Caverns, a Scene the most dismal and dreary, that Imagination can possibly paint; and the pendant Rocks which sometimes break in very large Pieces overhead, and from the Sides, strike the Mind with dreadful Apprehensions of Danger.

The Roof appears to be of nearly an equal Height in every Part; and very much resembles the Ceiling of a Gothic Cathedral.—The Sides are almost perpendicular, and considering the Whole to be entirely the Work of Nature, of uncommonly just Proportion.—The Place is rendered still more awful, by the great Reverberation which attends the Voice when you speak loud; and if thoroughly illuminated, must have a very beautiful Appearance.

The

The Water, which when I was there at both Times, totally covered the Bottom, was of an oval Form, and as sweet, clear and good, as any I ever drank, and in many Places between 7 and 8 Fathom deep; but in August 1762 it was found not more than one Fathom: So that in a dry Season, you may (as I am informed) safely walk round the Sides. And notwithstanding, when I visited this Place a second Time, it was at least 20 Feet perpendicular lower than when I first went there, as it is supposed upon the most just Calculation, to sink about 10 Inches in a Day and a Night.

I could not perceive the least Appearance of the two prominent Rocks, as mentioned by Captain COLLINS, who visited this Place in September, 1682. By this Gentleman's Account it appears,

there are some Caverns in the largest Chasm, which when I was there, were filled with Water, and consequently not discernable. Perhaps, when the Place is free from that Inconveniency, it may exhibit a very different Appearance from what it did when I was there, and may be of much larger Dimensions.

As I was determined during my stay, which was about an Hour and a Half, to view the Place attentively, I made one of the Men row a floating Stage (launched whilst I was there) with several Candles on it, which burnt perfectly clear, twice round the Cavern, so that I had a tolerable View of every Part of it.—At the further End, about 8 Feet above the Water, (when I was first there) is a Cave, which I suppose to be the same as mentioned by Captain STURMEY, who visited
this

this Place in 1669; the Entrance into which is about 10 Feet broad, and 5 high, and very much resembles the Mouth of a large Oven. A Gentleman who has traversed it almost to the End, assured me, it was nearly as long as the large one below, but much narrower.

Having by this Time sufficiently gratified my Curiosity, I began to think, to use the Words of a great and ancient Poet, of once more revisiting “ The roddie Lemes of Daie.” I found the Ascent far more difficult than the Descent, and was struck with Horror at the Sight of the rugged Rocks I had just passed.—In my Passage up, I was greatly alarmed by being thrown on my Back, in a Place where the Rock was almost directly perpendicular over the Water, but soon recovered myself, though not without Difficulty,
and

and was very thankful when I had once more put my Feet on *Terra Firma*, and had a Sight of my anxious Friends and Acquaintance, who flocked round me, as if I had been a Being risen from the subterranean World; and laughed very heartily, when they saw the dirty Condition I was in, and the very grotesque Figure I made with a large Collier's Hat, Jacket and Trowsers, and my Handkerchief bound round my Head.

I shall now take Leave for the present, of this dismal Place, with the following Remark, viz. Should any one be desirous of seeing yawning Caverns, dreadful Precipices, pendant Rocks, and deep Water, rendered still more tremendous by a few faint glimmering Rays of Light reflected from its Surface (which had passed through the Crannies above) than if obscured by
total

total Darknefs; let him descend, and take a Survey of *Penpark-Hole*, and I will engage his Curiosity will be fully gratified, as he will there see such dismal Scenes, as are scarcely to be paralleled, and of which the most lively Imagination can form at best, but a very faint Idea.

An ingenious Person* who has several Times descended this Place in search of Mr. NEWNAM's Body, twice made the Tour of Europe, and visited most of the remarkable Caverns in this Part of the Globe, assured me, he had seen very few more horrid and difficult to explore, than that of *Penpark-Hole*.

There

* The Gentleman above alluded to, is Capt. JAMES HAMILTON, formerly an Officer in the late King of Prussia's Service.

There is a lateral Cavity, about 120 Feet to the Eastward of *Penpark-Hole*, the Entrance into which though much easier, and far less dangerous than that into the greater Cavity described in the preceding Pages, has yet a tremendous Aspect. I conceive the Descent to be about 3 Feet in 6 perpendicular. When you are let down about 13 Yards from the Surface, you land on a small narrow Part of the solid Rock; which in this Place divides into two Branches; one running Westward, the other Eastward. Here having disengaged ourselves from the Ropes by which we descended, we got on our Feet but proceeded with Caution, the Bottom being very rugged and uneven, and the Passages leading into these Caverns, very narrow, steep, and slippery; in some Places ascending, in others descending.

The

The Branch on the West Side, runs about 14 Yards, when the Rock terminates, and eludes any further Search. I examined them both with great Attention, in company with Mr. WILLIAM WHITE, an ingenious Land-Surveyer, who took an exact Drawing of them on the Spot. That on the East, extends about 30 Yards from the first Landing-Place, when it turns down, and doubles to the West: the Passages being in that Place, nearly stopped up by several large Stones, which appeared to be placed there on Purpose to prevent any over curious Person, from penetrating farther into these dark and dismal Regions. But Mr. WHITE sometime afterwards, with the utmost Difficulty, and not without great Hazard, forced himself through upon his Belly, and when he had passed through three other Caverns found himself at the Mouth

D

of

of the Eastward Cavity; (as mentioned in p. 15,) the whole being about 200 Feet from the Place where the Rock divides itself. But as these Caverns are very similar to the others, I would by no Means advise any one to gratify an idle Curiosity by so hazardous an Undertaking; for should a Stone of any considerable Size fall and stop the Passage by which he entered, it would (in my Opinion) be absolutely impossible for a Person in such a Situation, ever to extricate himself.

The several Caverns we examined, were extremely curious, and well worth our Inspection. The Passages leading into them, were generally from 3 to 6 Feet broad, and from 6 to 12 high, and the Rock was veined in several Places, with a semi-pelucid Spar, though not in such Quantities as in the larger Cavern.—In
the

the Roof of these Caverns, and upper Parts of the Sides, are a great Number of Cavities in the solid Rock, in Form of inverted Funnels, which as they widen in Proportion to their Depth, prove they could not have been made by Art, (as some have absurdly asserted) but by the Retreat of the Waters which flowed thro' them, into the great Abyfs beneath, at the Time of the universal Deluge, of which great and awful Event, they still remain, as so many undeniable Proofs. Vid. the second Edition of the Rev. Mr. CATCOTT's ingenious Treatise of the Deluge, Page 342.

As *Penpark-Hole* would probably never have been explored by me, were it not for the melancholy Event which terminated the Existence of the Rev. Mr. NEW-NAM, a minute and authentic Detail of

his untimely and truly lamentable Fate, will not I presume be unacceptable to my Readers.

On Friday, March 17, 1775, the Rev. Mr. THOMAS NEWNAM, one of the Minor Canons of Bristol Cathedral, and Son of Mr. SAMUEL NEWNAM, an eminent Banker of the same City, accompanied a Gentleman and two young Ladies to visit *Penpark-Hole*. When they arrived there, Mr. NEWNAM had the Curiosity to try the Depth of it with a Line; and as there is a considerable Declivity between the Rocks, before you come to the perpendicular Fall, he went a little Way down, the more readily to cast in the Line, and there (for his greater Safety) caught hold of a Twig of an Ash-Tree that grows across the Aperture; but the Ground being slippery and moist, his Feet gave way,

way, and the Twig breaking in his Hand, he slid down the Declivity, and fell into this dreary Cavern, in the Sight of the Gentleman and the two young Ladies, neither of whom could possibly afford him the least Assistance, and whose poignant Grief on this truly melancholy and very distressing trying Occasion, may be much better conceived than expressed. Various Trials were made for some Weeks after the unhappy Event, to find the Body, but without Success. He was a very promising young Gentleman, about twenty-six Years of Age, and universally respected by his numerous Acquaintance. There is one very peculiar Circumstance attendant on this Occasion worth reciting. The very Morning the melancholy Disaster happened, he officiated at Clifton Church, and read the 88th Psalm, it being one appointed for the Day's Service,

vice. I would refer any serious Person to the Perusal of that Psalm, and let him observe, how prophetic it is of the Event that befel Mr. NEWNAM, and how descriptive of that gloomy Mansion of which he soon after became an Inhabitant.

On Tuesday April 25, 1775, the Body of the above-mentioned unfortunate Gentleman was discovered by the following very singular Accident, after lying in the Water thirty nine Days, viz. from the 17th of March to the 25th of April. Mr. EDWARD ELTON, a Gentleman of Bristol, laid a Wager of Five Guineas with Mr. ROBERT TUCKER, belonging to the Custom-House of the same City, that he would not venture to descend to the Bottom of *Penpark-Hole*.

The

The Wager, after much Hesitation, was accepted by the latter; but previous to his Descent, a Man was let down with some Lights, who when he got to the Bottom, threw a Stone accidentally into the Water, and perceiving it did not produce any Noise or Agitation, conjectured it might light on something floating on the Surface: After looking some Time very attentively, he perceived an Object which he conceived to be a human Body. Mr. TUCKER, who was by this Time safely landed, called to the Persons above, to send some one down who could swim, to go in Search of the Body, which was immediately complied with, and the Man presently plunging into the Water, pushed the Body before him, to the Side of the Rock, from whence it was with some Difficulty, brought to the Landing-Place, at the Bottom, and soon after to the Surface

face above, and taken immediately to the House of JOHN HARMER, Esq; at Penpark, which is very contiguous.

When found his Left Hand was laid across his Forehead, as if to screen himself from being hurt, his Right Arm broken, and he had a deep Contusion on the back Part of his Head; his Face was red as Scarlet, and his Body greatly swelled. Many are the Conjectures respecting his remaining so long under Water; but the most probable is, that the Surge occasioned by the Agitation of his falling into it, carried him into the Chasm or Aperture in the Rock below; and what corroborates this Supposition is, that another Cavern before unobserved, was discover'd when Mr. NEWNAM was found; which when the Accident happened was near 30 Feet under Water, and as the
Roof

Roof appears to be considerably higher than the Mouth, in all probability, he was buoyed up by the Water, and pressed against the Top of it, and consequently eluded the Search of the Persons employed to find him; but when the Mouth of the Cavern came to be laid open, the Body worked its Way out, and floated on the Surface. He was interred at Westbury-Church, the Thursday following, April 27th, being his Birth-Day, when he would have entered the twenty-sixth Year of his Age.

The Writer cannot conclude the preceding brief Narrative of the fatal Catastrophe which befel Mr. NEWNAM (already published in *Rudder's History of Gloucestershire*, and by the Editor of the *Bristol and Hotwell Guide*,) without extreme Concern in being under the una-

E

voidable

voidable Necessity of recurring to so melancholy an Event; but as it was so immediately connected with the History of *Penpark-Hole*, and the only Circumstance that led to an Examination of the Cavern, it will, he trusts, be deemed a sufficient apology for adverting to it on the present Occasion.

The annexed being Captains STURMEY and COLLINS's Descriptions of *Penpark-Hole*, extracted from the 2d Volume of LOWTHORP's Abridgment of the Philosophical Transactions, will not it is presumed be unacceptable to my Readers.

I descended, says he, by Ropes 4 Fathoms almost perpendicular; and from thence 3 Fathoms more obliquely, between two great Rocks, when I found the Mouth of this spacious Place, from
which

which a *Mine-Man* and myself lowered ourselves by Ropes, 25 Fathoms perpendicular, into a very large Place, which resembled to us the Form of an Horse-Shoe, for we stuck lighted Candles all the Way we went, to discover what we could find remarkable. At length we came to a River, or great Water, which I found to be 20 Fathoms broad, and 8 Fathoms deep. The *Mine-Man* would have persuaded me, that this River ebbed and flowed; for we found the Water had sometimes risen 10 Fathoms above its present height: But I proved the contrary, by staying there from three Hours Flood to two Hours Ebb, in which Time we found no Alteration in this River. Besides, its Waters are fresh, sweet and cool, and the Surface of this Water, as it is now at 8 Fathoms deep, lies lower than the Bottom of any Part of the *Severn-Sea*.

near us, so that it can have no Communication with it.

As we were walking by this River, 32 Fathoms under the Ground, we discovered a great Hollowness in a Rock some 3 Feet above us; so that I got a Ladder down to us, and the *Mine-Man* went up the Ladder to that Place, and walked into it, about 70 Paces, till he had just lost Sight of me, and from thence cheerfully called unto me, and told me he had found a *rich Mine*; but his Joy was presently turned into Amazement, and he returned affrighted by the Sight of an *Evil Spirit*, which we cannot persuade him but he saw, and for that Reason will go thither no more.

Here are Abundance of strange Places, the Flooring being a Kind of white Stone
ena-

enameled with *Lead Ore*, and the pendant Rocks were glazed with *Salt-Petre*, which distilled upon them from above, and Time had petrified.

Four Days after his Return, Captain STURMEY was troubled with an unusual and violent *Head-Ache*, which he imputed to his being in that Vault, and falling from his *Head-Ache* into a *Fever*, he soon after died.

Sir ROBERT ATKINS in his History of Gloucestershire, quotes Captain STURMEY's Account, and tells us that this Experiment was in the Year 1669, and that afterwards, Captain COLLINS, in the Year 1682, attempted to make some further Discoveries, who gives the subsequent Account of his Adventure :

That

That he found the Tunnel, whereby himself and his Companions descended, to be from the Surface to the Opening of the Cavity below, 39 Yards. The Hole spreading into an oblong irregular Figure, its greatest length was 75 Yards, and greatest breadth 41: from the highest Part of the Roof to the Water was 19 Yards. The Water was then, viz. September 1682, in a Pool at the North-End, which was the deepest Part; it was 27 Yards in length, 12 in breadth, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ deep; there appeared two Rocks above the Water, all covered with Mud, but the Water was sweet, and good; there was a large Circle of Mud round the Pool, and reaching far up towards the South-End; which shewed that the Water at other Times had been 6 Yards higher than it was then. The Tunnel or Passage down, was somewhat Oblique, very rugged

ged and rocky; in some Places it was 2 Yards wide, and in some 3 or 4; but nothing observable therein, save here and there some of that *Spar* which usually attends the Mines of Lead Ore. In the Way 30 Yards down, there runs in Southward a Passage 29 Yards in length, parallel to the Surface above, it was 2 or 3 Yards high, and commonly as broad, and alike rocky as the *Tunnel*, with some Appearances of *Spar*, but nothing else in it except a few *Bats*.

The Cavity below was in like Manner rocky and very irregular, the Candles and Torches burnt clear, so as to discover the whole Extent, thereof, nor was the Air any thing offensive.

The Bottom of this Hole where the Land-Waters gather, is 59 Yards down
from

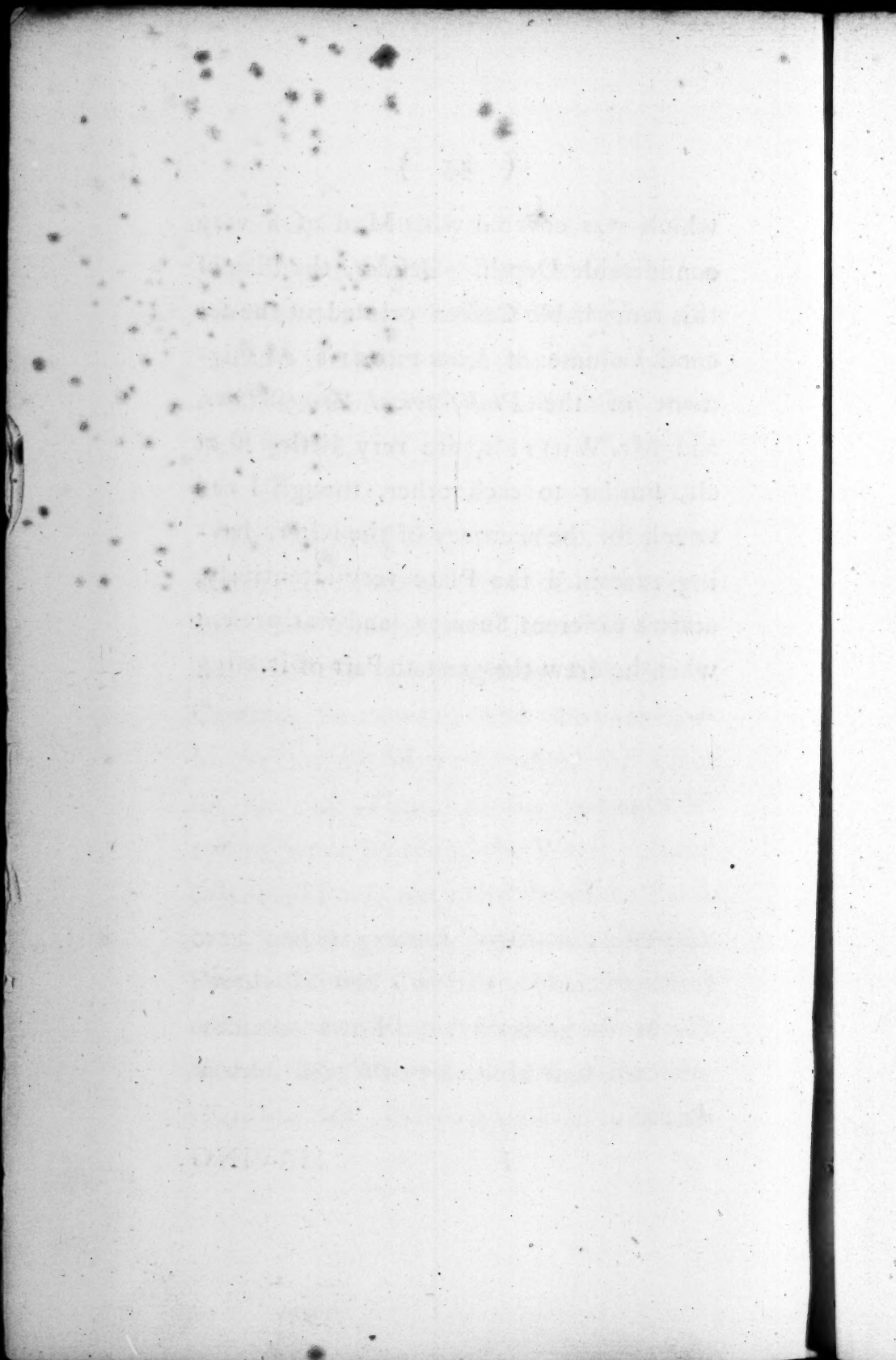
from the Surface of the Earth; and by good Calculation the same Bottom is 20 Yards above the highest Rising of the Severn, and lies into the Land about 3 Miles distant from it, and about as far from Bristol.

The Form of *Penpark-Hole*, more particularly the interior Parts of it, are certainly very much altered since the Publication of the two preceding Accounts by Captains STURMEY, and COLLINS;—Mr. WILLIAM WHITE, visited this Place for the last Time, in the Autumn of 1776; when he found the Water reduced to a small Pool, not more than four Yards over, and its greatest Depth, not above six Feet.—Captain COLLINS, (vid. Page 42) mentions two Rocks standing above the Water, Mr. WHITE could find but one, which

which was covered with Mud of a very considerable Depth. Besides, the Plan of this remarkable Cavern printed in the second Volume of LOWTHORP'S Abridgment of the *Philosophical Transactions*, and Mr. WHITE'S, are very little, if at all, similar to each other, though I can vouch for the accuracy of the latter, having examined the Place very attentively, at two different Surveys, and was present when he drew the greatest Part of it.

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HAVING



HAVING been honoured with two Letters from the late Dr. JEREMIAH MILLES, Dean of Exeter, (which refer more immediately to the Subject of this Treatise,) I feel myself happy in this Opportunity of evincing the high Sense, I entertain of being admitted into Habits of Friendship, with a Character so eminently distinguished in the Literary World; and present my Readers with the following Extracts from them:

HARLEY-STREET, *June 8, 1775.*

DEAR SIR,

“ Mrs. B—— was so obliging as to forward to me, through my Nephew’s Hands, the Favour of your Letter dated the 5th instant, accompanied by your curious Account of *Penpark-Hole*, the untimely
Grave

Grave of the unfortunate Mr. NEWNAM. You seem to have had a great Curiosity, and not a little Resolution, to venture down into that Abyfs; though the only real Danger in those Kinds of Caverns, is the Difficulty of Ascent and Defcent; for as to the Air in them, it is not unwholsome, nor are the Appearances in any of them very different from each other. I have been in feveral of them, which are, for the moft Part, to be found in Limestone Rocks, owing to the Beds in that Kind of Stone, having contracted themselves into a clofer Body, and within a narrower Compafs, fo as to leave Fiffures in feveral Parts.—There is alfo generally a Stream of fubterraneous Water in them, as at the *Peak*, *Pool's*, and *Wokey-Hole*. It is very right, however, that thefe Depths fhould be examined, and defcribed, as a curious Part of our Natural Hiftory; but
you

you were not contented with one Search; and by that Means had it in your Power to reconcile two different Appearances.— Your whole Account, and that of the finding poor Mr. NEWNAM's Body, is curious and entertaining; but I cannot help being surpris'd at his great Indiscretion, in trusting himself to such deceitful Supports.

“ I have formerly read some Parts of your Brother's *Essay on the Deluge*, as I have those of other Writers on the same Subject. As I remember, your Brother's was very ingenious, though, perhaps, I might not be able to subscribe to all that he says on that Subject.

“ Having received all the Satisfaction possible from your Relation of *Penpark-Hole*, I have returned it by my Nephew,
that

that you may have an Opportunity of gratifying other Friends with your Account of that dreadful Cavern.—My Nephew, who returns in about a Week's Time, will be the Bearer of any Communications which you shall be pleased to make to,

SIR,

Your obliged, humble Servant,

JEREMIAH MILLES."

Extract of a second Letter from the same Gentleman, dated

HARLEY-STREET, May 14, 1776.

" I am to thank you also for a second Favour in the Account you have sent me of the lateral Recesses near *Penpark-Hole*. These Cavities entice the Curious to pursue them, but they too often, and too soon

soon, check and stop our Curiosity, by dipping into a Stream which cannot easily be passed.—All Limestone Rocks have fewer or more such Cavaties; but *Wokey-Hole* in Somersetsshire, *Penpark-Hole* near Bristol, and *Kent's Hole* near Torbay in Devonshire, are the most remarkable of those in the West.

“ Give me leave to repeat my Thanks for these Communications, and to assure you, that I am,

SIR,

Your most faithful,

and obedient Servant,

JEREMIAH MILLES.”



